

THE INVENTION CLAIMED IS:

1               1. A method of controlling a set top box  
2 comprising:  
3                       providing a set top box that can be  
4 controlled by a telephone line coupled to the set top box;  
5                       receiving a telephone call from a calling  
6 party via the telephone line; and  
7                       controlling the set top box via at least one  
8 command transmitted by the calling party to the set top box  
9 during the telephone call.

1               2. The method of claim 1 wherein controlling  
2 the set top box via at least one command transmitted by the  
3 calling party comprises receiving at least one  
4 predetermined number dialed by the calling party.

1               3. The method of claim 1 wherein controlling  
2 the set top box comprises disabling the set top box.

1               4. The method of claim 1 wherein controlling  
2 the set top box comprises enabling the set top box.

1               5. The method of claim 1 wherein controlling  
2 the set top box comprises directing the set top box to  
3 decrease a volume of a television set coupled to the set  
4 top box.

1               6. The method of claim 5 further comprising  
2 directing the set top box to transmit an audio signal from  
3 the calling party over a speaker of the television set.

1               7. The method of claim 1 wherein controlling  
2 the set top box comprises directing the set top box to play  
3 at least an audio portion of a television event over the  
4 telephone line.

1               8. The method of claim 1 wherein controlling  
2 the set top box comprises directing the set top box to tune  
3 to a television event.

1               9. The method of claim 1 wherein controlling  
2 the set top box comprises directing the set top box to  
3 record a television event.

1               10. The method of claim 9 wherein directing the  
2 set top box to record a television event comprises  
3 directing the set top box to transmit a record command to a  
4 video recording device.

1               11. The method of claim 1 wherein controlling  
2 the set top box comprises directing the set top box to play  
3 a telephone message previously recorded by the set top box.

1               12. An apparatus adapted to employ a telephone  
2 interface comprising:

3                   a processor comprising computer program code  
4   adapted to control a set top box via at least one command  
5   transmitted by a calling party over a telephone line  
6   coupled to the set top box, the command being transmitted  
7   during a telephone call.

1                   13. A set top box comprising the apparatus of  
2   claim 12.

1                   14. A computer program product for controlling a  
2   set top box comprising:  
3                    a medium readable by a computer, the  
4   computer readable medium having means for controlling a set  
5   top box via at least one command transmitted by a calling  
6   party over a telephone line coupled to the set top box, the  
7   command being transmitted during a telephone call.